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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 12 August 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

The situation in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, remains extremely critical, as Israel, the occupying Power, persists with its violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, causing the continued deterioration of the situation in all aspects, including the continued suffering of the Palestinian people under its occupation, and further deepening despair and inflaming heightened tensions.

As you are well aware, the situation is particularly grave in the Gaza Strip, where the Palestinian civilian population, which has already suffered inordinately under Israel's eight-year inhumane blockade, is finding it nearly impossible to cope with the massive humanitarian disaster inflicted upon it by the 36-day Israeli military onslaught. In this regard, despite the fragile new 72-hour ceasefire that went into force at midnight on Monday, 11 August, in Gaza, the massive devastation, destruction, trauma and havoc wreaked by the occupying Power will make the task of recovery in the coming days and weeks a gruelling and painful experience.

As of today — and not taking into account the recovery efforts under way, in which rescue workers continue to pull dead civilians from the rubble of demolished homes — more than 1,940 Palestinians have been killed, of whom at least 1,400 were civilians, among them 467 children, 243 women and 87 elderly persons, and nearly 10,000 Palestinians have been injured, including at least 3,009 children, 1,912 women and 359 elderly, by the Israeli occupying forces in the recent military aggression. Using all means of military weaponry, the occupying Power has deliberately unleashed excessive, indiscriminate and disproportionate force against the defenceless civilian population in the Gaza Strip. These brutal killings and injuries were clearly committed by Israel in grave breach of international

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humanitarian law, which forbids, inter alia, wilful killing and the wilful infliction of great suffering or serious injury to the body or health of protected persons.

In addition to causing civilian casualties, the occupying forces have deliberately caused the wanton destruction of Palestinian property in the Gaza Strip, in grave breach of international humanitarian law. In this connection, at least 8,800 structures have been completely demolished and 41,420 homes have been damaged, rendering 100,000 people homeless. The humanitarian situation continues to be atrocious, with over 485,000 people, almost one quarter of Gaza's population, forcibly displaced and sheltering in schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) — more than a quarter of a million people are taking refuge in United Nations shelters alone — as well as in mosques, churches and hospitals.

Widespread destruction and damage has also been caused to vital infrastructure, such as Gaza's only power plant, and to several hospitals and schools, as well as to numerous public institutions and mosques and thousands of businesses, factories and agricultural lands. Of course, it must also be recalled that the occupying Power's rampage in the Gaza Strip did not leave the United Nations facilities there unharmed, as several UNRWA schools also came under Israeli attack, which caused the deaths of many Palestinians and United Nations staff and gravely damaged United Nations facilities.

We continue to appeal to the international community for international protection to be provided to the Palestinian civilian population, which in Gaza is living under unbearable, inhumane circumstances, with no clean water, no electricity and a shortage of food, medical equipment and supplies. Indeed, the extent of human suffering and destruction wrought by the occupying Power is vast. Trauma and suffering are widespread and deep, affecting nearly every single Palestinian woman, man and child in Gaza.

These actions by Israel, the occupying Power, have not only caused a grave humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip but, as we have reiterated on numerous occasions, also constitute war crimes. All of the crimes committed by the occupying Power must be thoroughly investigated and the perpetrators must be held fully accountable and brought to justice. In this regard, we stress our conviction that only accountability will bring an end to Israel's impunity and flagrant disregard for its obligations under international law, and we reaffirm the intention to continue to vigorously call for and to pursue accountability until the perpetrators of these crimes against the Palestinian people are punished and justice is served.

At the same time, I must draw your attention to the fact that Israel also continues to commit other grave breaches of international law throughout the rest of the Occupied State of Palestine, ensuring the continued destabilization of the situation and fuelling tensions and frustrations. Israeli occupying forces, and the extremist and terrorist settlers Israel has illegally transferred to the Palestinian land, have continued to brutalize the Palestinian civilian population in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Over the past week, Palestinians protesting Israel's aggression against their brothers and sisters in the Gaza Strip have been met with excessive and indiscriminate use of force and many have been killed; many others have been injured.

In addition, we are compelled to convey to you below a list of just a small fraction of the multiple grave violations, many of them amounting to war crimes, committed by Israel, the occupying Power, since our last letter dated 4 August 2014. We will continue to keep you informed of the situation on the ground once information becomes available in order to more fully document these crimes against our people.

5 August:

- Nidal Raed Olaiwa (age 12) died of wounds sustained as a result of an earlier Israeli airstrike that targeted a civilian car in Gaza City.

7 August:

- Rozi Talab Jaber (age 8) was severely injured when she was deliberately run over by a car driven by an Israeli settler in the city of Al-Khalil (Hebron) in the West Bank.

8 August:

- Ibrahim Zuhair Al-Dawawsa (age 10) was killed during an airstrike on Al-Nour Al-Mohammedy mosque in Al-Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood north of Gaza City. The Israeli strike also injured 14 people.
- Three Palestinians from the Abu Haddaf family were killed by an Israeli airstrike on their house in Al-Qarara town north-east of Khan Younis in the Gaza Strip.
- Shahd Oweiss (age 9) was severely injured when she was deliberately run over by a car driven by an Israeli settler south of the city of Nablus in the West Bank.
- Mohammed Ahmed Al-Qatari (age 19) was killed by Israeli occupying forces east of Al-Beira in the West Bank. He was left to bleed to death before his body was handed over to Palestinian medical crews.

9 August:

- Israeli shelling of Ezz Eldin Al-Qassam mosque in Al-Nusseirat refugee camp in central Gaza Strip killed three Palestinians and injured three others.
- Ayeh Anwar Al-Sha'er (age 13) was killed in an airstrike on her house in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.
- An Israeli airstrike killed Abdel Hakim Suleiman Al-Masdar (age 56) and Mo'men Al-Masdar (age 19) as they rode a motorcycle in Al-Moghazi refugee camp in central Gaza Strip.
- Mahmoud Al-Jorani was killed by an Israeli strike in the city of Deir Al-Balah in the Gaza Strip.
- Tareq Ra'ed Abu Rmaila (age 13) was brutally beaten by Israeli settlers in Al-Khalil in the West Bank.
- Nader Mohammed Idriss (age 42) died of wounds sustained on 8 August when he was shot with live ammunition by Israeli occupying forces in Bab Al-Zawia in the centre of Al-Khalil during a protest against Israel's aggression on the Gaza Strip.

10 August:

- An airstrike against the house of Ayman Baraka in Bani Suhaila village, east of Khan Younis injured Mr. Baraka and killed his wife, Amani Al-Abd Baraka (age 35).
- Ahmed Al-Masri (age 17) was killed in a strike on agricultural lands south-west of Deir Al-Balah.
- Hassan Kawarei (age 24) and Ihsan Mahrous Al-Agha (age 23) were killed by an airstrike as they rode on a motorcycle in Khan Younis.
- Khalil Mohammed Al-Anati (age 11) was killed by Israeli occupying forces in Al-Fawwar camp, south of Al-Khalil.
- Fawzi Mohammed Fawzi Bahr (age 12) was injured by a rubber-coated steel bullet shot by Israeli occupying forces as he was standing in front of his house in Beit Amr, north of Al-Khalil.
- An Israeli airstrike targeted a car in Beit Hanoun killing Anwar Al-Zaanin and injuring two others.

11 August:

- Minutes before the ceasefire went into effect, Israeli occupying forces targeted Khan Younis, killing at least two Palestinians and injuring several others.
- Two bodies, still unidentified, were uncovered from under the rubble in Khozaa town, east of Khan Younis, and two other Palestinians died of wounds sustained as a result of Israeli attacks, including Maydaa Mohammed Aslan (age 18 months).
- Zakariya Al-Aqraa' (age 24) was killed by Israeli occupying forces after they attacked his house in Qablan town, south of Nablus, with grenades and heavy fire.

Clearly, the above-listed violations by Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinian people display, yet again, Israel's disregard of civilian lives and of international law and we call on the international community to firmly condemn such violations. Israel must finally be compelled to cease all of its grave breaches and violations against the Palestinian people and abide by its obligations under international law, including humanitarian and human rights law. The fact that the necessary measures were never taken by the international community to hold Israel accountable for its crimes against the Palestinian people has only encouraged the occupying Power to add another long list of war crimes to its heavy dossier. In this connection, we reiterate our call to the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security and immediately adopt the draft resolution before the Council to address the critical situation in the Occupied State of Palestine, especially in the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian people, especially the young children in Gaza who have only known war, siege and occupation for the entirety of their young lives, deserve a principled international position to ensure that they are spared further undue suffering.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 515 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000

(A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 4 August 2014 (A/ES-10/648-S/2014/567) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador, Permanent Observer
of the State of Palestine to the United Nations